

May 10, 2006 - Slaughter Calls on HUD to Release Shirlington Limousine Records

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

Slaughter Calls on HUD to Release Shirlington Limousine Records
No Contracts to Bush Dissenters, but Half a Million Dollars to a Criminal Involved in the Watergate Prostitution Scandal?

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today sent a letter to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Alphonso Jackson, calling on him to immediately release all records and documents pertaining to the \$519,823 contract awarded to Shirlington Limousine and Transportation, Inc.

In light of Shirlington Limousine's reported connection to the Duke Cunningham bribery and prostitution scandal, as well as recent comments made by Jackson that he refused to award a contract to an individual who said he did not "like" President Bush, the HUD contracting process should be opened up to the light of day, starting with Shirlington Limousine.

Slaughter said, "The Bush Administration is denying contracts to qualified companies who happen to disagree with the President personally, but awarding contracts to criminals with troubling business records. Meanwhile, Shirlington Limousine is also embroiled in a shocking scandal involving bribery and prostitution.

"HUD must be held accountable for the contracts they award, and the Republican Congress has an abysmal track record when it comes to oversight. I hope Secretary Jackson will accommodate my request and allow the American public to see exactly how the Bush Administration spends their taxpayer dollars."

BACKGROUND :

CONVICTED CUNNINGHAM-LINKED DEFENSE CONTRACTOR MITCHEL WADE IMPLICATED FELLOW CO-CONSPIRATOR BRENT WILKES IN LIMOUSINE & PROSTITUTION SCHEME: Mitchell Wade pleaded guilty in February to giving bribes of more than \$1 million to former Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham. Reportedly, Mr. Wade told federal investigators that "arrangements" for a limousine driver and prostitutes being driven to hotel suites in Washington were made by Mr. Brent Wilkes and two employees of Mr. Wilkes company. Mr. Wilkes has been confirmed as "Co-conspirator No. 1" in the federal criminal case involving the bribing of former Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham. [Scot J. Paltrow, "Prosecutors May Widen Congressional-Bribe Case," Wall Street Journal, 4/27/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE, A NORTHERN VIRGINIA FIRM, ASSISTED WILKES WITH WATERGATE "ENTERTAINMENT": Shirlington Limousine and Transportation, Inc., a firm based out of Arlington, Virginia, provided limousine services for Brent Wilkes "for whatever entertainment he had in the Watergate." [Dean Calbreth, "Co-conspirator's possible links to prostitutes eyed," San Diego Union Tribune, 4/28/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE WON A \$519,823 HUD CONTRACT: Aside from \$25 million in DHS contracts, Shirlington Limousine has also been awarded a half-million dollar HUD contract, as well as a \$142,000 Federal Highway Administration contract. [Ken Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/3/06]

SHIRLINGTON PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER D. BAKER'S EXTENSIVE CRIMINAL RAP SHEET: Shirlington Limousine's President, Christopher D. Baker, has a 62-page criminal rap sheet that runs from 1979 to 1989. [Ken

Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/1/06 and 5/3/06]. Baker's criminal record "includes numerous misdemeanors and two felony convictions." [Babcock and Baker, Washington Post, 5/6/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE'S QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES: Shirlington Limousine reportedly operates in "a deliberately murky way." The firm operates "under at least four different names; in addition, the office addresses listed on its business filings regularly change. A number of those office addresses are actually at residential buildings or business suites, and calls to the listed phone numbers are taken by an answering service." [Ken Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/3/06]. The \$21 million contract from the DHS, referenced above, was challenged based on allegations that Shirlington Limousine "falsely claimed to be located in a poor neighborhood," which was apparently one of the preconditions based upon which that contract was awarded. [Babcock and Baker, Washington Post, 5/6/06]

FEDERAL PROSECUTORS ARE INVESTIGATING WHETHER OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR THEIR STAFF MAY HAVE USED "FREE SERVICES" OF "PROSTITUTES," "LIMOUSINE AND HOTEL SUITES": "Besides scrutinizing the prostitution scheme for evidence that might implicate contractor Brent Wilkes, investigators are focusing on whether any other members of Congress, or their staffs, may also have used the same free services." [Scot J. Paltrow, Wall Street Journal, 4/27/06]

WILKES HAS ALSO BEEN LINKED TO TWO OTHER SENIOR HOUSE REPUBLICANS, WHO RECEIVED HUGE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS WHILE WILKES WAS AWARDED MULTIMILLION DOLLAR PENTAGON CONTRACTS: Since 1994, Wilkes and his defense firm ADCS "gave \$40,700 in campaign contributions to Rep. Duncan Hunter, a San Diego Republican who now chairs the House Armed Services Committee. Hunter has acknowledged that he joined with Cunningham in 1999 to contact Pentagon officials who reversed a decision and gave ADCS one of its first big contracts, for nearly \$10 million." [Matt Kelley & Jim Drinkard, "Contractor spends big on key lawmakers," USA Today, 11/30/05] Wilkes has also been linked to another California Republican, Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, who "led panels that ordered the Pentagon to continue programs that aided ADCS when Pentagon officials wanted to cut them." Lewis received \$71,253 from Wilkes and his employees in donations since 1993. They met at "various events." [Kelley & Drinkard, USA Today, 11/30/05]

Rep. Slaughter's letter to HUD is included below:

May 10, 2006

The Honorable Alfonso Jackson

Secretary

U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development

451 7th Street, SW

Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Jackson,

I was troubled to read recent news reports about the nature of certain contracts awarded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Specifically, I am concerned that a HUD contract has been awarded to a company allegedly involved in illicit activities including bribery, gambling, and prostitution.

Last week, Harper's Magazine's web blog posted an update to its coverage of the federal contracts awarded to Shirlington Limousine and Transportation, Incorporated of Arlington, Virginia. This report indicated that HUD had awarded the company a \$519,823 contract. As you may know, the company's president, Christopher D. Baker, has an extensive criminal history including drug possession, attempted robbery, and car theft along with other offenses over the last decade. Additionally, allegations have been made that suggest that individuals involved in an ongoing Congressional bribery investigation used the limousine service to provide escorts and other services to federal officials in exchange for

federal contracts. The fact that a contract from your agency has been awarded to a company embroiled in such a serious criminal investigation raises significant questions about the HUD's procurement process.

This comes on the heels of reports that at an April 28th Dallas real estate forum, you stated that individuals or organizations who had expressed their opposition to President Bush would not be eligible to receive federal contracts. All qualified organizations and businesses should have the opportunity to compete in the federal procurement process, and contract should be awarded to the company that can do the best work at the least cost to the government. Awarding federal contracts based on political affiliation is not only inappropriate, it is a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Therefore, I request that you release all documents and communications in your possession pertaining to any HUD contracts with Shirlington Limousine. Thorough examination of these documents is critical to eliminating suspicion of inappropriate or illegal activity in awarding Shirlington Limousine a federal contract. I also ask you to clarify your comments regarding the eligibility of Administration opponents to compete for federal contracts.

I hope you will swiftly honor my request for the release of all pertinent documents to restore the integrity to the procurement processes of your department.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Member of Congress

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